THE HUMAN TORCH
NO. 28
10¢
COMICS
TORCH! ONE OF THEM MURDERED HIM!
YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO DISCOVER OUR SECRET!
WHAT'LL WE DO, TORCH? WHAT CAN WE DO? I'M STUMPED!
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE THE HUMAN TORCH
ONE OF YOU IS A MURDEROUS MONSTER! I'M NOT EVEN SURE THE OTHER EXISTS, AND I CAN'T TAKE THE CHANCE OF PUNISHING THE WRONG ONE—OR, OF LETTING THE GUILTY ONE ESCAPE!
CAN YOU PIN A MURDER ON ONE TWIN, WHEN YOU CAN'T TELL THEM APART?... AND SUPPOSE IT'S NOT TWINS AT ALL, BUT ONE GIRL WITH A TWISTED MIND? DON'T FAIL TO READ
"THE TWINS WHO WEREN'T!"

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THE HUMAN TORCH
The MOST PERPLEXING CASE OF THEIR DARING CAREER PLUMMETS INTO THE HANDS OF TORCH AND TORO AND WITH IT MURDER, PLUS A COUPLE OF BEAUTIFUL GIRLS! HERE IS A SPINE-TINGLING ADVENTURE FOR THE POWER-PACKED TORCH AND TORO AS THEY SEEK TO UNRAVEL TANGLED THREADS IN THE STRANGE MYSTERY of
"THE TWINS WHO WEREN'T!"

That FAMED DUO, TORCH AND TORO, FLAMES OVER THE CITY SEEKING NEW ADVENTURE, WHEN...
LOOK! THAT GIRL ON THE LEDGE! TORCH! SHE'S GOING TO JUMP!
WE'VE GOT TO STOP HER!
HOTEL
CIRCLE ABOUT! MOVE IN BEHIND HER!
A HUSH FALLS OVER THE CROWD BELOW AS THE TORRID TEAM MOVES SILENTLY, SWIFTLY! then
HURRAY! THEY GOT HER!
WHAT'S THE IDEA? WHY SHOULD YOU TRY TO KILL YOURSELF?
I DIDN'T! I DON'T KNOW HOW I GOT HERE! I DIDN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING UNTIL SOMEONE PUSHED ME OUT ON THAT LEDGE!
I WAS AFRAID TO TRY CLIMBING IN AGAIN... AFRAID I'D FALL!
WHO ARE YOU?

I'M JOYCE CLAYTON!
THE MILLION DOLLAR HEIRESS? OH, OH! NEWSPAPERMEN!
WE WANT A STORY!
WE'LL TAKE YOU HOME, JOYCE! BUT TELL ME MORE!
IT'S AS I SAID! SOMEONE PUT ME OUT ON THAT LEDGE! SOMEONE WHO LOOKED LIKE LANCELOT!
LANCELOT? ARE YOU KIDDING?
NO! HE LOOKED JUST LIKE THAT KNIGHT LANCELOT, IN SHINING ARMOR! YOU MUST BELIEVE ME!
SOON, AT THE PALATIAL CLAYTON HOME...
GOOD HEAVENS! ELAINE!
ELAINE? WHY, UNCLE JOHN! WHATEVER'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? I'M JOYCE!
A MOMENT LATER...
ELAINE, HERE'S YOUR TWIN SISTER, JOYCE, AND YOUR COUSIN, TED...
ELAINE, DEAR! I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE SAFE, BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE RUN AWAY!
AND HERE ARE TWO FRIENDS OF YOURS, WAITING TO TAKE YOU HOME!
COME, FAIR ELAINE!
I'M NOT ELAINE!
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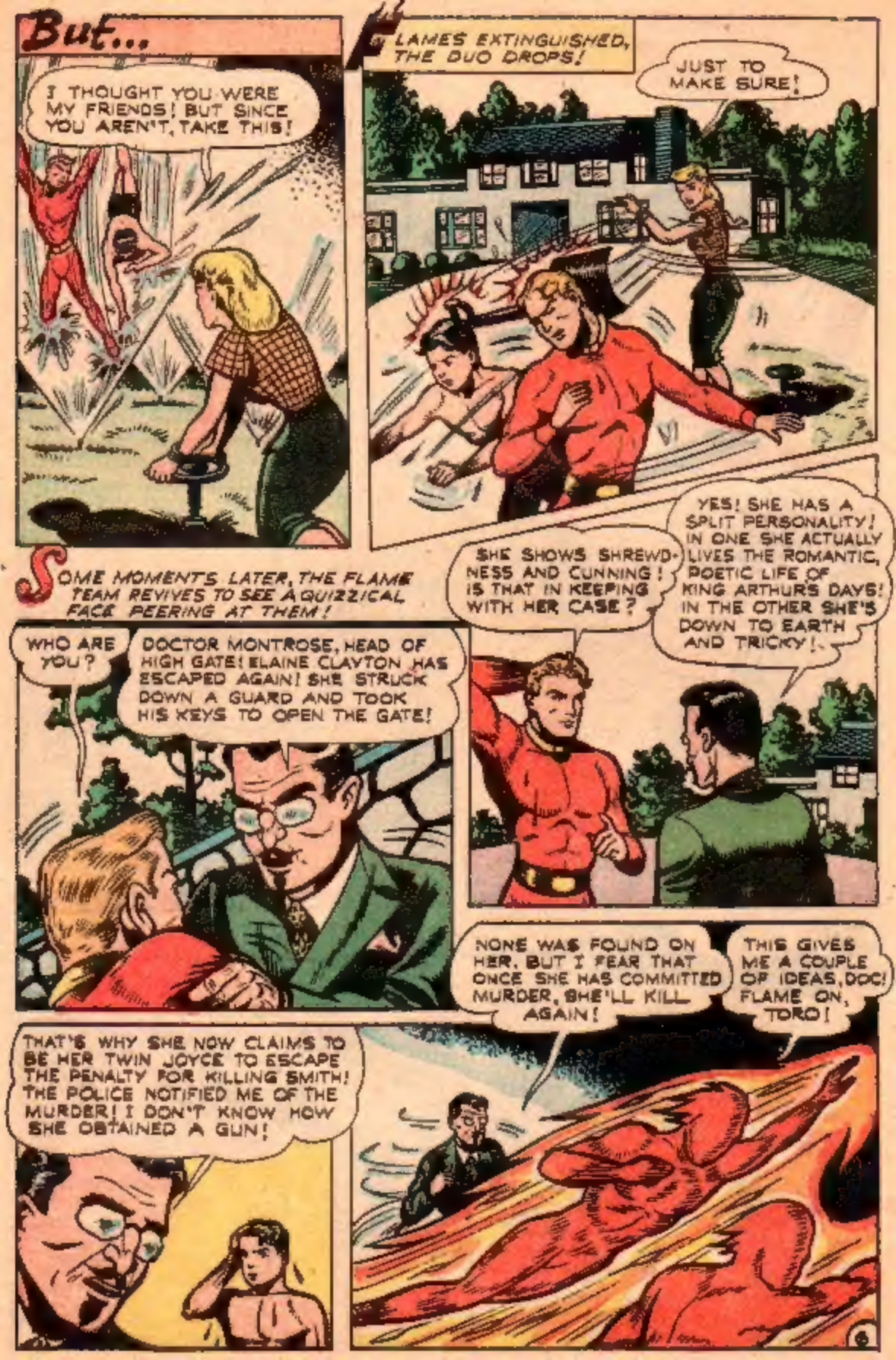
BUT I'M NOT ELAINE! I'M JOYCE!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, TORCH! I'LL EXPLAIN! COME WITH ME!
A MINUTE LATER, UNCLE JOHN AND THE TORRID TEAM ARE IN CLAYTON'S STUDY..
THE GIRLS ARE IDENTICAL TWINS! BUT POOR ELAINE'S BEEN OUT OF HER HEAD EVER SINCE AN UNFORTUNATE ROMANCE WHEN SHE WAS EIGHTEEN! SHE LOVED A CHAP NAMED CHARLES SMITH. HIS LOVE POEMS DID IT!
"YOUR KNIGHT, LANCELOT"!
I'VE KEPT SOME OF THEM... "I LOVE YOU MADLY, ELAINE SO FAIR, WITH THE STAR-LIT EYES AND BURNISHED HAIR"! ALL THAT RUBBISH...AND HE SIGNED HIMSELF...
BUT HIS AFFECTIONS CHANGED! ELAINE COULDN'T STAND LOSING HIM! SHE WENT OUT OF HER MIND - IMAGINED SHE WAS SEEING LANCELOT IN SHINING ARMOR. SHE GOT SO BAD, WE HAD TO PLACE HER IN HIGH GATE SANITARIUM!
WE HAD A CALL FROM THERE EARLIER TODAY THAT SHE'D ESCAPED! TED, WHAT IS IT?
LIEUTENANT WALSH FROM HOMICIDE'S HERE! CHARLES SMITH'S BEEN MURDERED!
A CONFERENCE WITH THE MAN FROM HOMICIDE...
SMITH WAS FOUND SHOT TO DEATH AT HIS STUDIO! DEAD AT LEAST ONE HOUR, SAYS THE CORONER. THERE WAS A NOTE BESIDE HIM - "FAREWELL, LANCELOT"!. SINCE WE HAD A CALL FROM THE ASYLUM ABOUT ELAINE ESCAPING, WE THOUGHT...
4

IF WE CAN GET A CONFESSION FROM HER... TORCH, WILL YOU HANDLE IT ?
OKAY, LIEUTENANT! TORO AND I WILL HUSTLE OUT TO HIGH GATE!
Meanwhile, AT THE SANITARIUM...
BACK TO YOUR CASTLE ROOM! THAT'S IT! YOU'RE NICE AND QUIET NOW! JUST STAY THAT WAY, ELAINE!
SUDDENLY
I'M NOT ELAINE! AND I'M GETTING OUT!
As THE GIRL RACES DOWN A CORRIDOR...
STOP HER!
Short MOMENTS AFTER...
JUMPING JUPITER! SHE'S GETTING AWAY!
AFTER HER, TORO!
5


But...
I THOUGHT YOU WERE MY FRIENDS! BUT SINCE YOU AREN'T, TAKE THIS!
FLAMES EXTINGUISHED, THE DUO DROPS!
JUST TO MAKE SURE!
SOME MOMENTS LATER, THE FLAME TEAM REVIVES TO SEE A QUIZZICAL FACE PEERING AT THEM!
WHO ARE YOU?
DOCTOR MONTROSE, HEAD OF HIGH GATE! ELAINE CLAYTON HAS ESCAPED AGAIN! SHE STRUCK DOWN A GUARD AND TOOK HIS KEYS TO OPEN THE GATE!
SHE SHOWS SHREWDNESS AND CUNNING! IS THAT IN KEEPING WITH HER CASE?
YES! SHE HAS A SPLIT PERSONALITY! IN ONE SHE ACTUALLY LIVES THE ROMANTIC, POETIC LIFE OF KING ARTHUR'S DAYS! IN THE OTHER SHE'S DOWN TO EARTH AND TRICKY!
THAT'S WHY SHE NOW CLAIMS TO BE HER TWIN JOYCE TO ESCAPE THE PENALTY FOR KILLING SMITH! THE POLICE NOTIFIED ME OF THE MURDER! I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE OBTAINED A GUN!
NONE WAS FOUND ON HER. BUT I FEAR THAT ONCE SHE HAS COMMITTED MURDER, SHE'LL KILL AGAIN!
THIS GIVES ME A COUPLE OF IDEAS, DOC! FLAME ON, TORO!

WHERE TO, TORCH? WHAT IDEAS DID YOU GET?
IDEAS ABOUT A SPLIT PERSONALITY'S BEHAVIOR! WE'RE GOING BACK TO THE CLAYTON HOME! I EXPECT WE'LL FIND ELAINE THERE AGAIN!
HERE WE ARE, TORO! SHOTS! HURRY, LAD!
Inside..
IT'S JOHN CLAYTON! GOSH, NOW SHE'S KILLED HER UNCLE!
SHE? THERE'S A HE RUNNING OUT!
NOT SO FAST! SAY, IT'S TED CLAYTON!
?
I WAS CHASING ELAINE! I WAS IN THE NEXT ROOM, HEARD SHOTS, CAME IN TO FIND ELAINE RUNNING OUT OF THE ROOM AND UNCLE JOHN DEAD! NOW, YOU'VE LET HER GET AWAY!
STAY HERE, TORO! I'LL LOOK AROUND THE GROUNDS!
NOT LONG AFTER, TORCH RETURNS...
I COULDN'T FIND HER! JOYCE, WHERE WERE YOU?
I CAME DOWN JUST A MINUTE AGO! POOR UNCLE JOHN AND MY POOR SISTER!
7

SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT SHE'S DOING! WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HER WHEN SHE'S CAUGHT? CAN SHE BE TRIED FOR MURDER?
PROBABLY NOT! BUT THEY'LL PROBABLY PUT HER IN A STRAIGHT-JACKET, TO PREVENT HER ESCAPING AGAIN!
I NOTICE YOU'RE WEARING AN ENGAGEMENT RING? WHO'S THE LUCKY FELLOW?
SHE'S ENGAGED TO LARRY AMBER. HE'S ON THE COAST NOW ON BUSINESS!
TORCH! YOU'RE MORE MYSTIFYING BY THE MINUTE! NOW WHERE TO?
TO PREVENT ANOTHER MURDER! I WANT IT TO LOOK LIKE WE'VE GONE AWAY! BUT YOU, LAD, UNFLAME AND RETURN SECRETLY TO THE HOUSE! AND KEEP AN EYE ON JOYCE! SOMETHING'S DUE TO HAPPEN!
I JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHING! LET'S GO, TORO!
AN ATTEMPT ON HER LIFE?
MAYBE! I'M GOING ON! I'VE A JOB TO DO — FAST!
MINUTES LATER, AS TORO STANDS VIGIL...
SHE'S GONE INTO HER ROOM! SO FAR ALL'S QUIET! TED'S DOWNSTAIRS... UMM, FOOTSTEPS! I'LL HIDE BEHIND THIS VASE!
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Shortly After..
OH! WHO'S THAT?
HOW FAIR I LOOK!
IT'S YOU!
YES, JOYCE DEAR! COME HERE TO ME . . . I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU! A BEAUTIFUL PRESENT!
OH!
I CAN'T AFFORD TO LET YOU LIVE ANY LONGER I'LL KILL YOU AND MAKE IT LOOK LIKE SUICIDE!
SUDDENLY!
THE FORTUNE WILL BE MINE! AND. . UGH!
THE NEXT MOMENT!
FORTUNE? SO THAT'S IT!
THE YOUNG CRIME-CRUSHER BARELY BEGINS TO FLAME-CIRCLE THE KILLER, WHEN...
THIS GAS PELLET WILL TAKE THE FIGHT OUT OF YOU! I'VE BEEN CARRYING IN CASE YOU FELLOWS GOT TOO SMART!
9

D THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO GET RID OF YOU!
BLT AGAIN, FLAMING FISTS STYMIE A MURDEROUB ACT!
NO USE, CLAYTON! YOU'RE FINISHED!
YOU MEDDLER! I'LL...
SAVE YOUR BREATH FOR THE CONFESSION!
Suddenly
IF YOU ARE JOYCE THEN I'M IN THE WRONG PLACE! I'VE COME TO SEE MY LADY LOVE... THE FAIR ELAINE!
LANCELOT! MY BELOVED LANCELOT!
AND NOW, ELAINE- YOU ARE ELAINE, AREN'T YOU?
ELAINE? OH NO.....I'M JOYCE!
10

I KNEW YOU'D RETURN TO CARRY ME OFF ON YOUR WHITE STEED!
TAKE HER! NOW WE DON'T KNOW WHICH TWIN IS WHICH - I HAD TO DO IT THIS WAY, IN CASE TED HELD OUT WITH HIS CONFESSION HOPING TO CONFUSE US - THIS SPEAKS FOR ITSELF, AND CLEARS THE REAL JOYCE!
FAR ELAINE, YOU MUST RETURN TO HIGH GATE CASTLE.
BUT, LANCELOT - MY LANCELOT!
I MUST LEAVE ON AN IMPORTANT MISSION! WAIT FOR ME FAR ONE
FAREWELL MY DEAR BELOVED! I SHALL WAIT!
WHEW! GLAD TO GET OUT OF THIS ME LIEUTENANT HAIGH PLAYING LANCELOT.
ALL RIGHT, LAD?
JUST SLIGHTLY CONFUSED! TED'S THE KILLER AND JOYCE & ELAINE BUT WHERE'S THE REAL JOYCE?
RIGHT HERE! TORCH FOUND ME NEAR THE HOUSE I WANT ANSWERS TOO! WHY SHOULD TED HAVE DONE SUCH A HORRIBLE THING?
FOR MONEY JOYCE! YOUR MONEY! AS SOON AS WE GET TED DOAN TO HEADQUARTERS I'M SURE HE'LL TELL ALL! OF COURSE THERE'S NOTHING TO HOLD BACK NOW!

Soon AFTER THE CONFESSIONS OF A MURDERER UNFOLD!

UNCLE JOHN AND I ENGINEERED ELAINE'S ESCAPE FROM HIGH GATE ON OUR LAST VISIT TO HER. THERE WE SHOWED HER HOW TO MANAGE IT. WE TOLD HER THAT IF SHE CAME HOME AND ***PRETENDED*** TO BE JOYCE, LANCELOT WOULD RETURN TO HER...

"...WHEN ELAINE ESCAPED, JOHN AND I DRUGGED JOYCE WITH CARIMYNTH, A DRUG THAT WOULD MAKE HER FORGET WHAT HAPPENED..."

"...WE SNEAKED HER UP THE SERVICE ELEVATOR TO THE HOTEL ROOM AND LEFT HER OUT ON THE LEDGE! I PUT ON A LANCELOT HELMET. SHE SAW IT AS SHE STARTED COMING TO...!"

JOHN AND I ARRANGED TO CONTROL JOYCE'S FORTUNE BY HAVING ELAINE SIGN JOYCE'S NAME TO A POWER-OF-ATTORNEY! THEIR HANDWRITINGS ARE IDENTICAL!

AND YOU THOUGHT JOYCE WOULD REALLY GO MAD IN THAT ASYLUM!

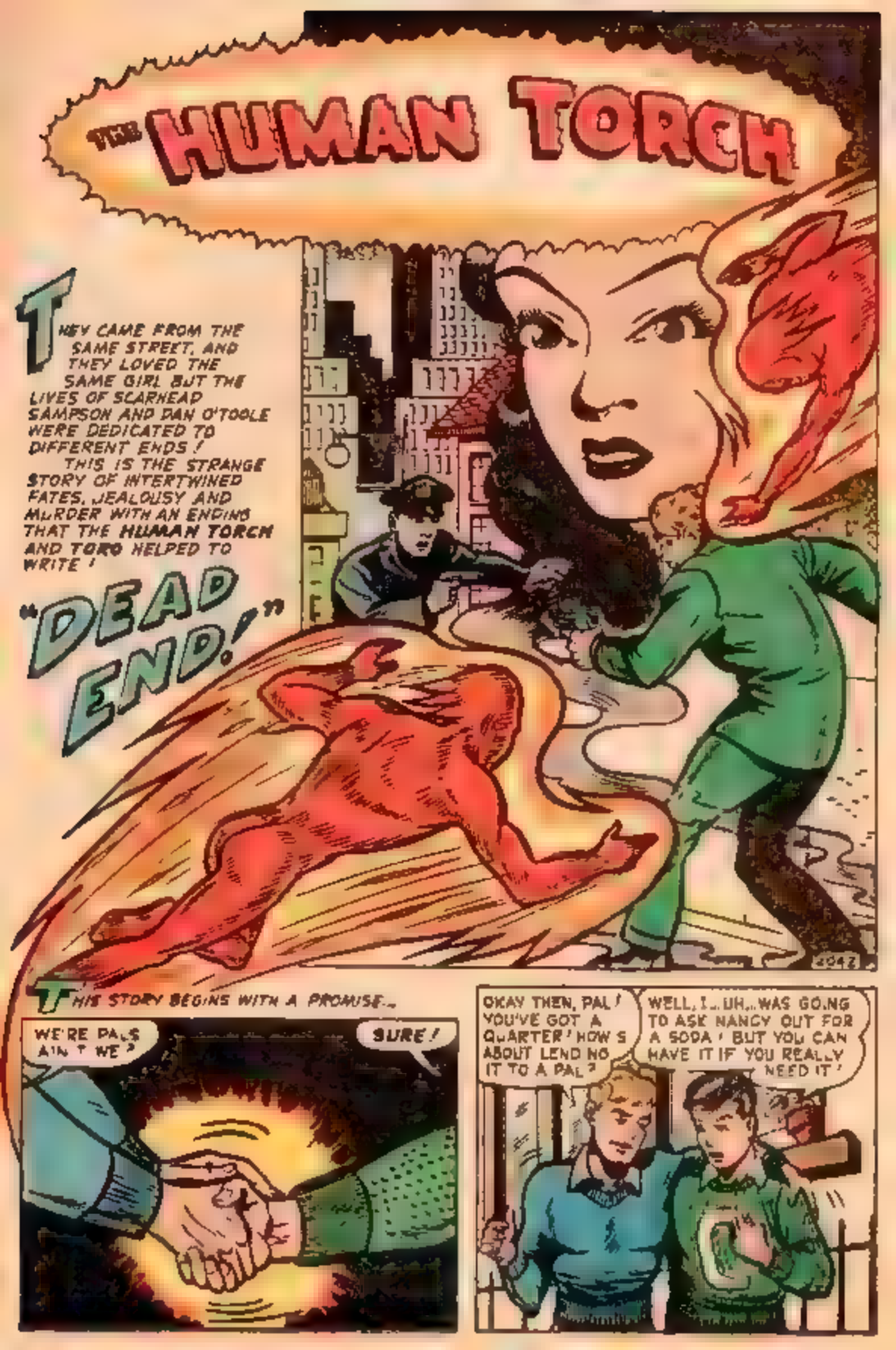
"...AND I ALSO KILLED SMITH TO MAKE IT APPEAR THAT ELAINE WAS ON A MURDER RAMPAGE AND I KILLED UNCLE JOHN TO GET ALL THE MONEY FOR MYSELF."

BUT, TORCH HOW DID ***YOU*** CATCH ON TO THE TWINS RIGHT IDENTITIES?

I REMEMBERED JOYCE SAID SHE ***SEEMED*** TO SEE LANCELOT ON THE LEDGE! BUT ELAINE WOULD'VE SAID SHE ***ACTUALLY*** SAW HIM! IT MADE ME SUSPICIOUS!

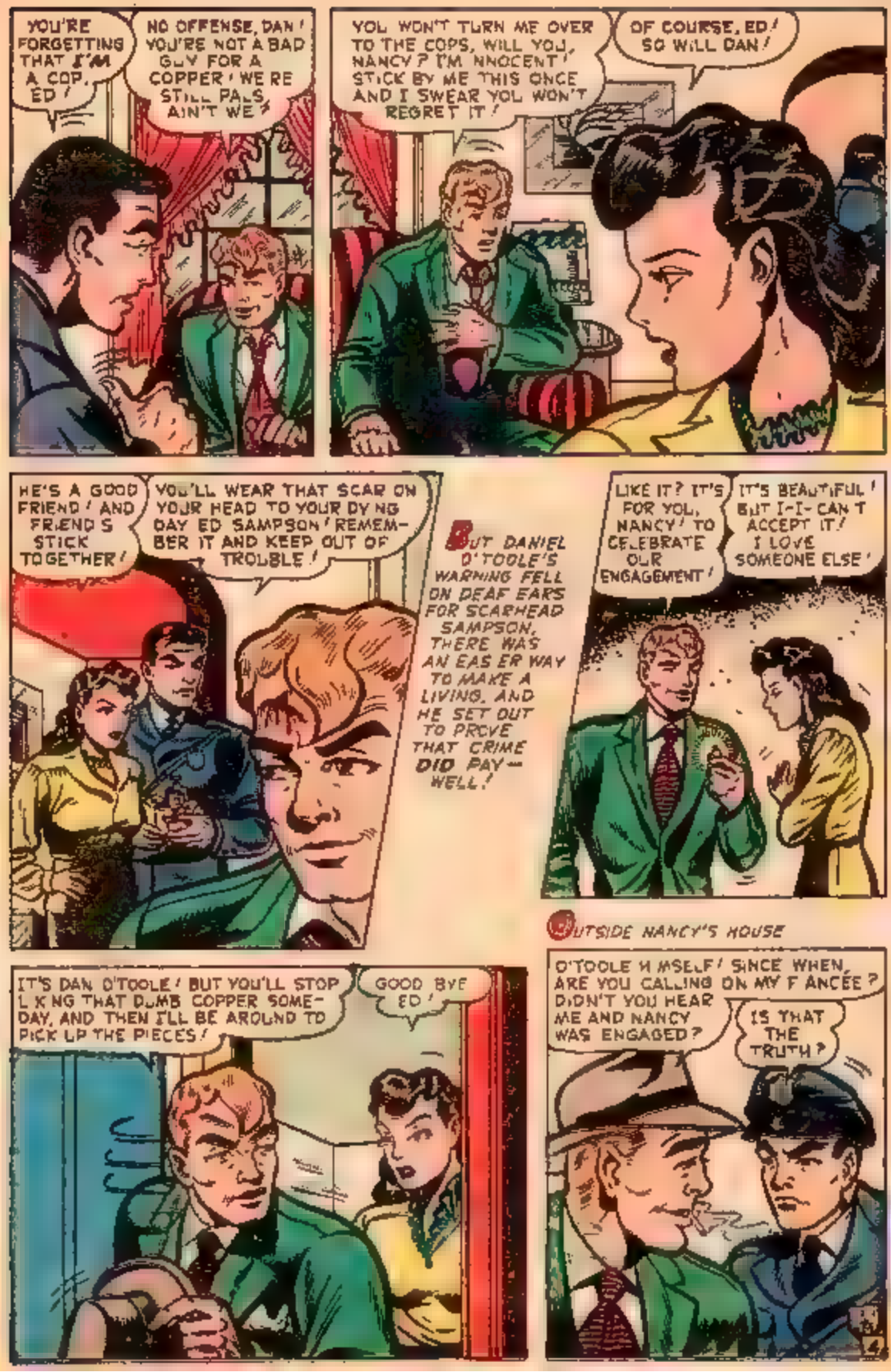
AND PUT ***ME*** IN THAT MONKEY SUIT I'M SURE GLAD ***THIS*** CASE IS OVER!

THE END


THE HUMAN TORCH
THEY CAME FROM THE SAME STREET, AND THEY LOVED THE SAME GIRL BUT THE LIVES OF SCARHEAD SAMPSON AND DAN O'TOOLE WERE DEDICATED TO DIFFERENT ENDS! THIS IS THE STRANGE STORY OF INTERTWINED FATES, JEALOUSY AND MURDER WITH AN ENDING THAT THE HUMAN TORCH AND TORO HELPED TO WRITE!
"DEAD END!"
THIS STORY BEGINS WITH A PROMISE...
WE'RE PALS AIN'T WE?
SURE!
OKAY THEN, PAL! YOU'VE GOT A QUARTER! HOW'S ABOUT LEND NO IT TO A PAL?
WELL, I...UH...WAS GOING TO ASK NANCY OUT FOR A SODA! BUT YOU CAN HAVE IT IF YOU REALLY NEED IT!

LATER
ED SAMPSON! SO THAT'S WHY YOU WANTED MY QUARTER YOU'RE TAKING NANCY OUT YOURSELF!
ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR! WE'RE STILL PALS, AIN'T WE?
SODA
THROUGH THE YEARS, ED SAMPSON AND DANIEL O'TOOLE REMAINED FRIENDS EVEN THOUGH THEIR DESTINIES TRAVELED DIFFERENT PATHS
PERHAPS EACH OF THEM SENSED THAT ONE DAY THEIR DESTINIES WERE TO MEET!
THIS IS ED SAMPSON, TEN YEARS LATER
THAT BLASTED GUARD NICKED ME!
BANK
HE WON'T USE THAT GUN ANYMORE! STEP ON IT!
THEN!
PRESS THE PEDAL TO THE FLOOR THE TORCH IS AFTER US!
HOTEL
WE'RE WASHED UP
HE MUST HAVE PICKED UP THE POLICE BROADCAST! I KNEW THERE'D BE TROUBLE WHEN THAT BANK TELLER SET OFF THE ALARM!

THAT'S THE BAND T'S CAR ALL RIGHT, TORO!
HE'S NOT JUST TAKING TARGET PRACTICE!
NOW IT'S OUR TURN!
UGH!
CAFE
DEL
LET'S TALK OVER THIS SITUATION BOYS!
AND THIS IS DANIEL O'TOOLE AND HIS GIRL NANCY.
THE GET-AWAY CAR CAREENS WILDLY AND CRASHES INTO A LAMP POST!
GOTTA GET AWAY! FIND A HIDEOUT—WHERE TORCH WON'T FIND ME!
NANCY! YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME!
ED!
GET SOME WATER AND FRESH BANDAGES DAN! HE'S BEEN HURT! WHAT HAPPENED?
CAR CRACKED UP! TH-THE STUPID COPS THINK I'M MIXED UP IN A ROBBERY!
3


YOU'RE FORGETTING THAT I'M A COP, ED!
NO OFFENSE, DAN! YOU'RE NOT A BAD GUY FOR A COPPER! WE'RE STILL PALS, AIN'T WE?
YOU WON'T TURN ME OVER TO THE COPS, WILL YOU, NANCY? I'M INNOCENT! STICK BY ME THIS ONCE AND I SWEAR YOU WON'T REGRET IT!
OF COURSE, ED! SO WILL DAN!
HE'S A GOOD FRIEND! AND FRIENDS STICK TOGETHER!
YOU'LL WEAR THAT SCAR ON YOUR HEAD TO YOUR DYING DAY ED SAMPSON! REMEMBER IT AND KEEP OUT OF TROUBLE!
BUT DANIEL O'TOOLE'S WARNING FELL ON DEAF EARS FOR SCARHEAD SAMPSON. THERE WAS AN EASIER WAY TO MAKE A LIVING, AND HE SET OUT TO PROVE THAT CRIME DID PAY—WELL!
LIKE IT? IT'S FOR YOU, NANCY! TO CELEBRATE OUR ENGAGEMENT!
IT'S BEAUTIFUL! BUT I-I-CAN'T ACCEPT IT! I LOVE SOMEONE ELSE!
OUTSIDE NANCY'S HOUSE
IT'S DAN O'TOOLE! BUT YOU'LL STOP LIKING THAT DUMB COPPER SOMEDAY, AND THEN I'LL BE AROUND TO PICK UP THE PIECES!
GOOD BYE ED!
O'TOOLE HIMSELF! SINCE WHEN, ARE YOU CALLING ON MY FIANCÉE? DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME AND NANCY WAS ENGAGED?
IS THAT THE TRUTH?
4

SURE! SHE ASKED ME TO TELL YOU! NO HARD FEELINGS DAN - WE'RE STILL PALS, AIN'T WE?
ARE WE? HAVE IT YOUR WAY!
BUT I'M WARNING YOU! YOU'RE A BIG SHOT RACKETEER NOW SCARHEAD BUT YOU'RE RIDING FOR A FALL!
WHEN I FALL IT'LL TAKE A BIGGER GUY THAN YOU TO CATCH ME!
THEN, ONE DAY, FATE CAUGHT UP WITH SCARHEAD SAMPSON!
WE'RE TOO LATE TORO! THE PLACE HAS BEEN ROBBED! AND THE CROOKS ARE GONE!
IT WAS. SCARHEAD... SAMPSON...
HEAR THAT, TORO?
SOON...
THEY DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A CHANCE TO UNLOAD THE EVIDENCE, TORO! WE'VE GOT THEM WITH THE GOODS!
I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE!
A DYING MAN'S ACCUSATION! BUT IT'LL STAND UP IN COURT!
SCARHEAD SAMPSON'S FIRST AND LAST MISTAKE!

HEY! JUST A MINUTE!
THAT DUMB COPPER! HE'S WORKING WITH THE TORCH! BUT HE WON'T STOP ME!
OH-H-H!
TAKE T— PAL!
NOT DEAD YET! THIS TIME I'LL—AGHHH—
THAT WAS THE END OF SCARHEAD SAMPSON! ON THE DAY HE WAS BURIED THE TORCH PRONOUNCED HIS FITTING EPITAPH
SECONDS LATER..
WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
I DON'T KNOW! I JUST WANTED TO ASK HIM A QUESTION! THE FIRST THING I KNEW HE DREW ON ME AND FIRED!
I'M SORRY IT HAPPENED THIS WAY! I ONLY WANTED TO KNOW WHY YOU SAID NANCY AND YOU WERE ENGAGED, WHEN IT ISN'T SO!
FORGET IT! SLATE'S WIPED CLEAN! WE'RE STILL PALS, AIN'T WE? UHHH!
HE WAS MY FRIEND—ONCE! BUT OUR PATHS WENT DIFFERENT WAYS!
HE WAS NO ONE'S FRIEND HIS KIND AREN'T MADE THAT WAY! AND THE PATH HE CHOSE LED STRAIGHT INTO A DEAD END!
THE END

THE HANGING WITNESS

OFFICER OSCAR ROSNER closed the door of his radio prowl car with a slam and walked up to the distraught man who was standing in front of the door of the two-family house.

"You called the police?" he asked.

"I can't get in," the young man told him. "I have the key to the Yale lock but somebody locked the lower lock and left the key in it."

"You live here?"

Quickly the young man produced identification.

"I live here with my uncle," he said. "I've been here since his wife died. He hasn't been well and he wanted some one around."

While he was speaking he followed the policeman who went back to the car and brought out a pair of long-nosed pliers.

"These will twist the key and force it out of the lock," the officer assured him. "We'll have you in the house in a moment."

While he spoke he worked over the door. There was a click as he grabbed the nose end of the key with pliers and gave it a sharp twist. Then he turned the knob of the door and it opened on well-oiled hinges.

As the officer stepped back and waited for the young man to enter, the young man hesitated.

"You'd better come with me, officer," he said nervously. "My uncle, well, you see he hasn't been feeling so good recently. Grieves about Aunt Edna and his own health hasn't been what it should be, he . . ." His voice trailed off as the policeman entered the hall of the building and looked up the long flight of stairs that led to the apartment above.

"You go first and put on the lights," Rosner told him. While he spoke he stooped in the hallway and picked up a short length of lead pencil that lay there and jammed it into his pocket. The young man apparently didn't notice as he took the steps two at a time and clicked on the light above.

Rosner reached the top of the stairs and saw the thing on the floor a split second behind the young man.

"Don't touch a thing," he ordered tersely. "Do you have a telephone here?"

"It's in the front room," the young man answered. "Oh, my poor uncle! I never thought he would do anything like this." He looked down at the grisly thing on the floor. The throat of the body was cut from ear to ear; in the right hand of the corpse was clutched a huge kitchen carving-knife.

Rosner went into the front room. He took his handkerchief from his pocket and gingerly, so as not to disturb any latent fingerprints, lifted the instrument from its cradle. He used the stub of pencil he had found below to dial headquarters.

His voice was low as he spoke into the phone.

"Better send a homicide car over, chief," he said into the mouthpiece. "Twenty-one twenty-three Willets Avenue. Looks like murder."

Rosner came back into the kitchen with his black report book out and fountain pen poised.

"Hate to bother you at a time like this," he began in an apologetic tone, "but you know, we have the routine reports to make. Now first your name, address and occupation."

"You saw my identification," the young man told him. "My name is James F. Benson, nephew of the dead man. I live right here and I am looking for a job right now."

Rosner picked up a written list on the table and read it idly. "One loaf of bread," it ran. "Half dozen eggs and two pounds of pork chops." All of the list was written in the backward slanting script of a left-handed man.

"You write this?" Rosner asked.

"No, it's my uncle's writing," Benson told him.

"He sure figured on feeding himself after he was dead, then," Rosner told the nephew wryly. "But then suicides do strange things sometimes. You think it was suicide, don't you?"

"Couldn't be anything else," Benson said. "That door downstairs was locked from inside, you know."

Rosner nodded and wrote in his black book while Benson fidgeted back and forth on his

feet. Finally Benson took a chair and collapsed rather than sat in it.

"Did your uncle have any money? You know, from the insurance of his wife's death? Also, was *he* insured?"

"I . . . I don't know much about his personal affairs," Benson replied. "I think he had a policy made out to me. I'm the only living relative left. He owns this house. Rents the downstairs."

The officer finally closed the book with a snap.

"We can't do much until the medical examiner gets here," he said in a matter-of-fact voice. "After that they can examine the place for fingerprints and look for clues if there are any." He looked at Benson closely. "I know you won't like this, but you may have to go to headquarters with us for questioning. Now if you could give me any light on this I might be able to make it easier for you. Did your uncle, for example, have any plans to marry again?"

For a moment Benson's face twisted while he thought.

"Well," he said slowly, "I know my uncle has been seeing Mrs. Lafontaine. She's a widow you know, and she used to know my uncle well before he married Aunt Edna."

Rosner opened his mouth to frame another question and then suddenly shut it again. A wail of police sirens outside brought young Benson to his feet while Rosner headed for the top of the stairs.

A moment later, three detectives came pounding up the stairs to the upper apartment. Doors below opened and slammed as curious neighbors were aroused by the wail of the police sirens.

"So you found yourself a stiff, eh, Rosner?" the first man said as he came up the stairs. "What do you make of it?"

Rosner grinned wryly.

"We'll have to wait and see what the medical examiner makes of it," he said. "The only way *I* see it is cold-blooded murder!"

For a moment the homicide man looked around the apartment. Benson stood on the opposite side of the room, his mouth open and an incredulous expression on his face.

"Murder?" Benson's tone was hoarse. "You think somebody murdered my uncle? How did they get out of here?"

Rosner looked at him and shook his head sadly.

"Maybe you would prefer to tell us," he said. "It would save me a lot of time and bother, but then of course you wouldn't. All of you punks think you have the perfect crime!"

While he was speaking he took the pencil stub out of his pocket and pointed it at young Benson.

"So you thought you'd croak your uncle before he married again and left you out in the cold, did you? You gave me the motive when you pulled that one about the Lafontaine woman. But the thing is, like all criminals you made a couple of mistakes. Mistakes that will burn you in the hot seat! One of them is putting a suicide knife in the right hand of a left-handed man!"

As young Benson started toward officer Rosner, he was quickly grabbed by one of the plainclothesmen and his arms were swung in back of him with a quick twist that made him helpless.

"You're crazy!" Benson croaked. "How about that locked door?"

"I'm afraid you put too much weight on that straw," Rosner said quietly. He pointed to two rounded indentations in the body of the pencil.

"I picked this up in the hall downstairs," Rosner explained. "Shall I show you how it works too?"

As Benson didn't answer, Rosner went over to the kitchen door that led to the top of the stairs. The key was in the lock, an old-fashioned model of the same type that had been locked downstairs.

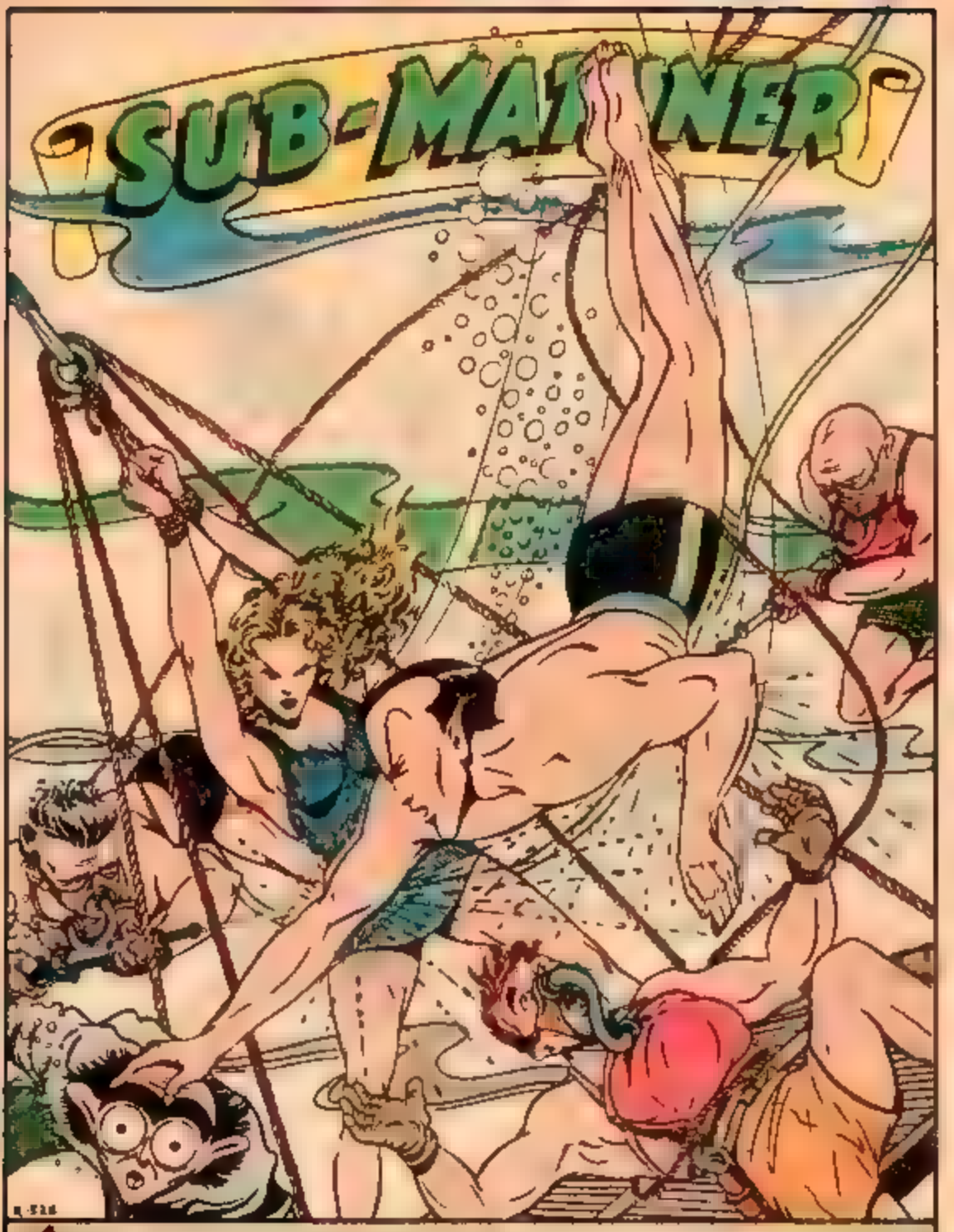
He inserted the pencil in the hole at the end of the key and then, looking around the kitchen, saw a piece of string hanging from the kitchen cabinet.

Slowly he picked this up and knotted one end around the lead pencil. Then, taking one end of the string with him, he went out on the landing and closed the door behind him.

With easy strokes he pulled up the loop of the string until it was taut at the key and then slowly he exerted pressure while the men in the room watched in fascination as the lead pencil slowly turned the key. There was a click and the door was locked! A few more pulls and the pencil dropped to the floor while the string went through the door into the hands of Officer Rosner.

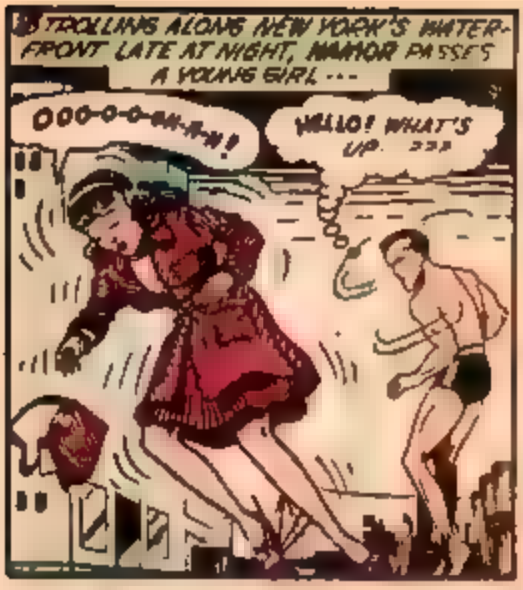
"Kids' tricks," Rosner said later at headquarters after Benson had been booked. "That gag is in every police manual in the country. And Benson was so sure of himself, he got careless. Although he retrieved the string and hung it up again in the kitchen cabinet, he forgot about the pencil in the hallway. When I spotted both, I put two and two together, and got my murderer! It's a wonder these so-called crafty criminals don't get wise to themselves!"

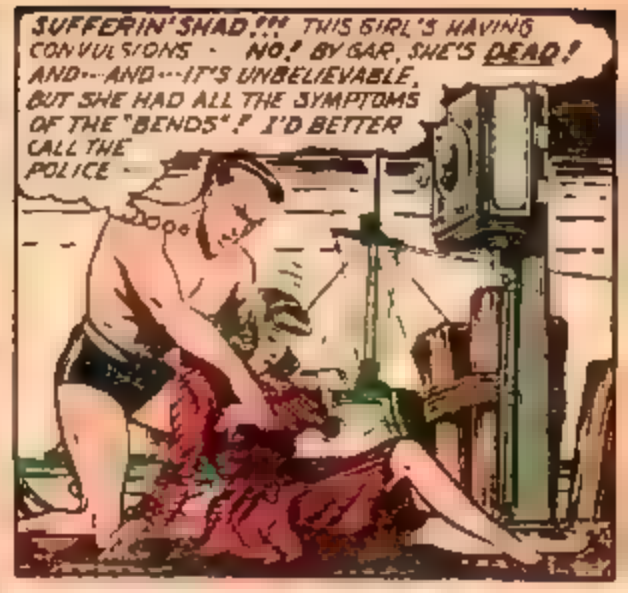
THE END F-24



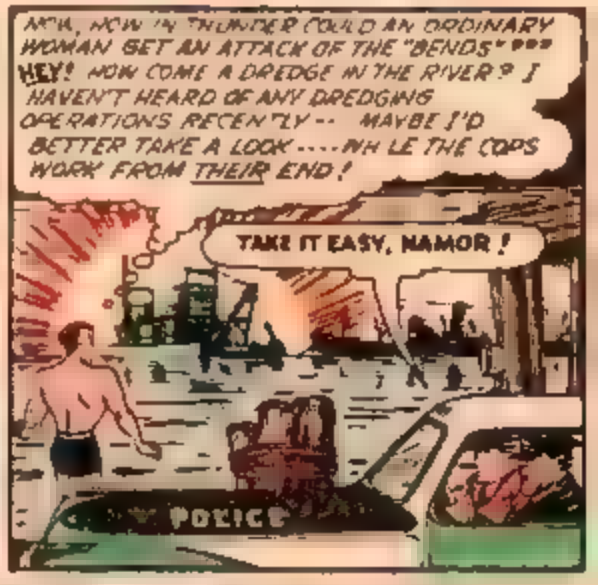
AN UNFORTUNATE GIRL DIES ---- NAMOR DISCOVERS A LABORATORY ---- NAMORA TAKES A RIDE — ON A DIVING PLATFORM ---- A LUNATIC PROFESSOR RUNS AMOK ---- AND THE SUB-MARINER BREAKS THE

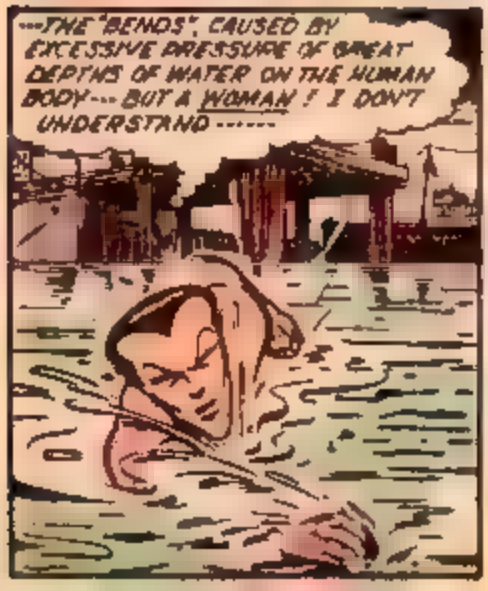
"CASE OF THE BENDS!"

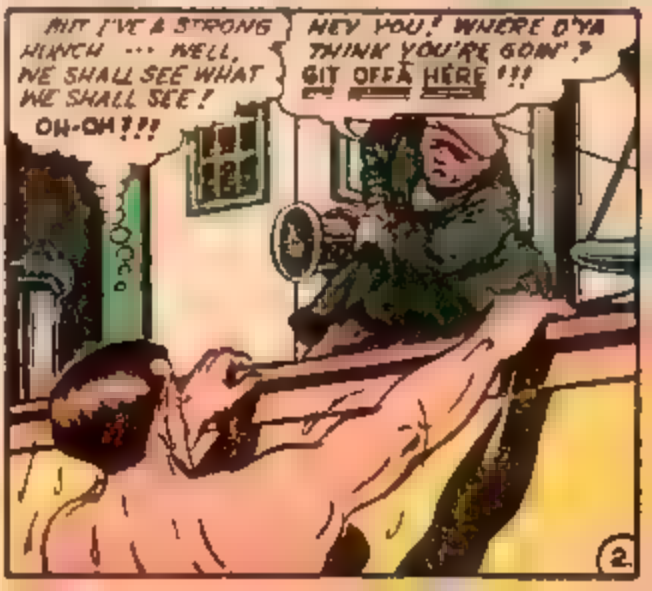

STROLLING ALONG NEW YORK'S WATER-FRONT LATE AT NIGHT, NAMOR PASSES A YOUNG GIRL ---
OOO-O-O-OH-H-H!
HELLO! WHAT'S UP ???


SUFFERIN' SHAD!!! THIS GIRL'S HAVING CONVULSIONS - NO! BY GAR, SHE'S DEAD! AND---AND---IT'S UNBELIEVABLE, BUT SHE HAD ALL THE SYMPTOMS OF THE "BENDS"! I'D BETTER CALL THE POLICE -

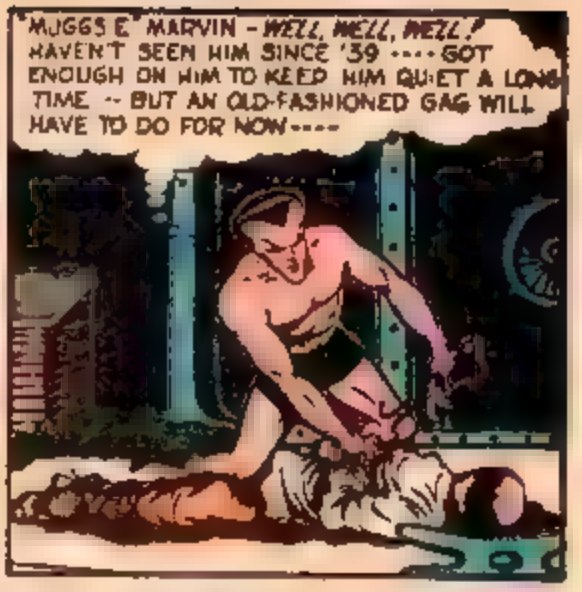
THREE MINUTES LATER ---
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT, SERGEANT - SHE COULD BE A WOMAN DIVER, BUT SHE DOESN'T CARRY THE PROPER IDENTIFICATION --- LOOKS SUSPICIOUS TO ME!

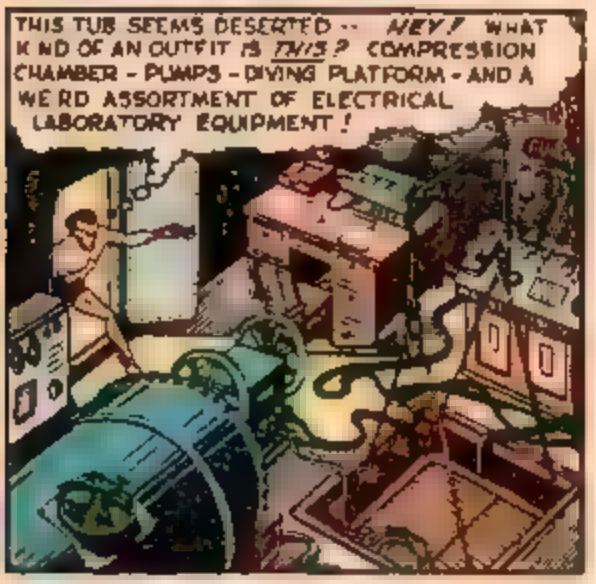

NOW, HOW IN THUNDER COULD AN ORDINARY WOMAN GET AN ATTACK OF THE "BENDS"??? HEY! HOW COME A DREDGE IN THE RIVER? I HAVEN'T HEARD OF ANY DREDGING OPERATIONS RECENTLY -- MAYBE I'D BETTER TAKE A LOOK ---- WHILE THE COPS WORK FROM THEIR END!
TAKE IT EASY, NAMOR!
POLICE

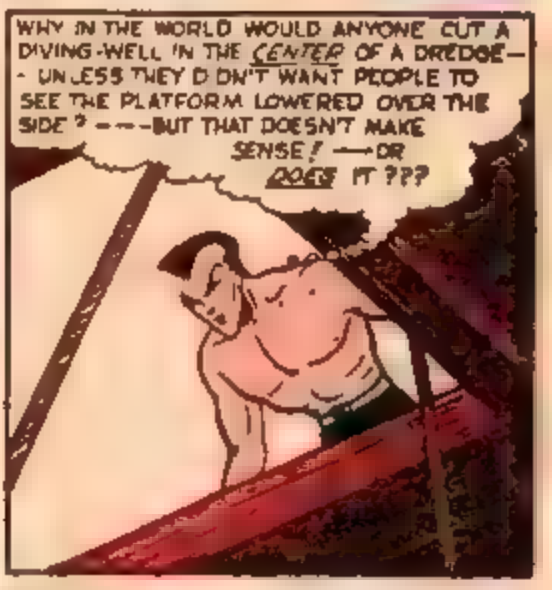

---THE "BENDS", CAUSED BY EXCESSIVE PRESSURE OF GREAT DEPTHS OF WATER ON THE HUMAN BODY --- BUT A WOMAN! I DON'T UNDERSTAND ------

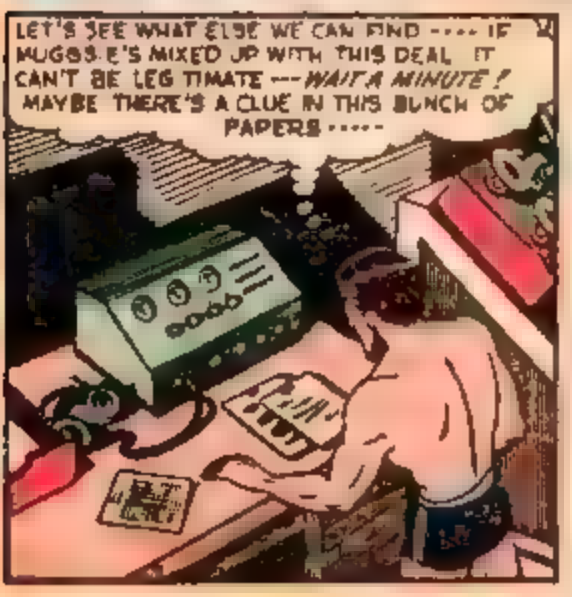

BUT I'VE A STRONG HUNCH --- WELL, WE SHALL SEE WHAT WE SHALL SEE!
OH-OH!!!
HEY YOU! WHERE D'YA THINK YOU'RE GOIN'? GIT OFFA HERE!!!
2

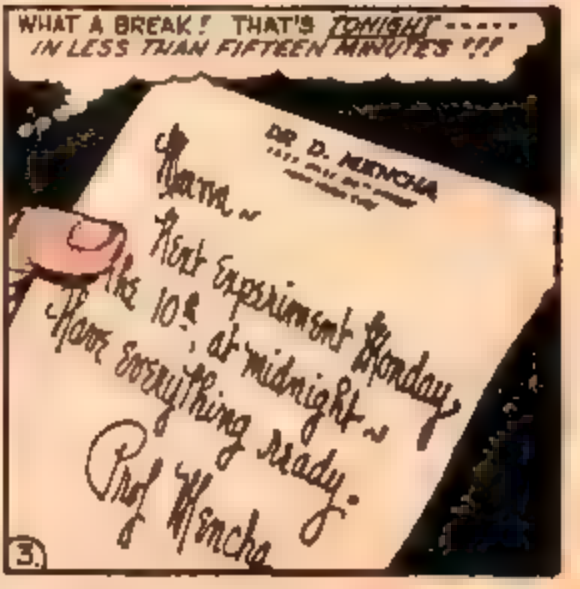
NOT TILL I FIND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR, SWEETHEART! AND YOU'LL BE MUCH SAFER OUT OF THE WAY!


MUGGS E. MARVIN - WELL, WELL, WELL! HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE '39 ---- GOT ENOUGH ON HIM TO KEEP HIM QUIET A LONG TIME -- BUT AN OLD-FASHIONED GAG WILL HAVE TO DO FOR NOW----

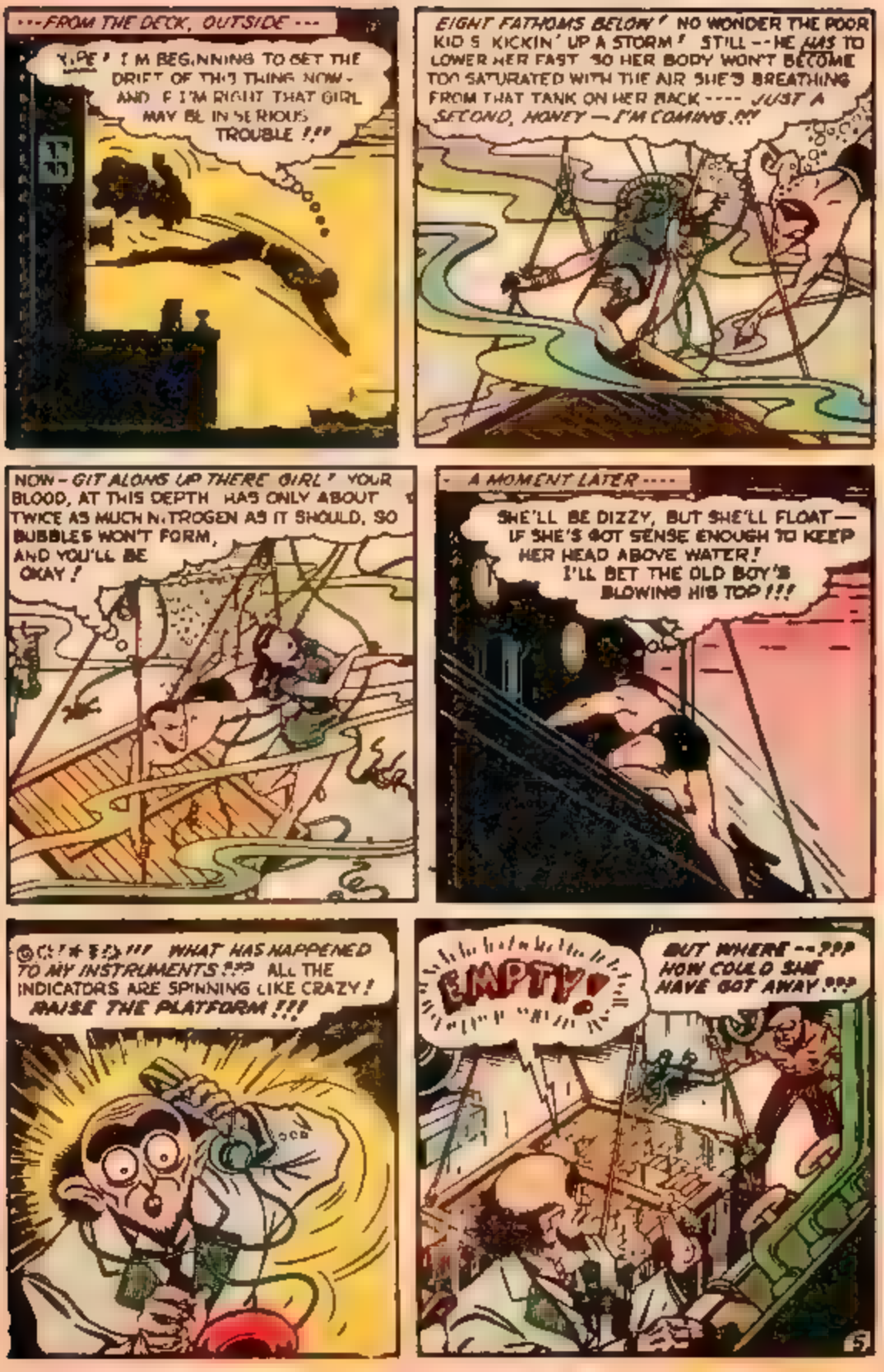

THIS TUB SEEMS DESERTED -- HEY! WHAT KIND OF AN OUTFIT IS THIS? COMPRESSION CHAMBER - PUMPS - DIVING PLATFORM - AND A WEIRD ASSORTMENT OF ELECTRICAL LABORATORY EQUIPMENT!

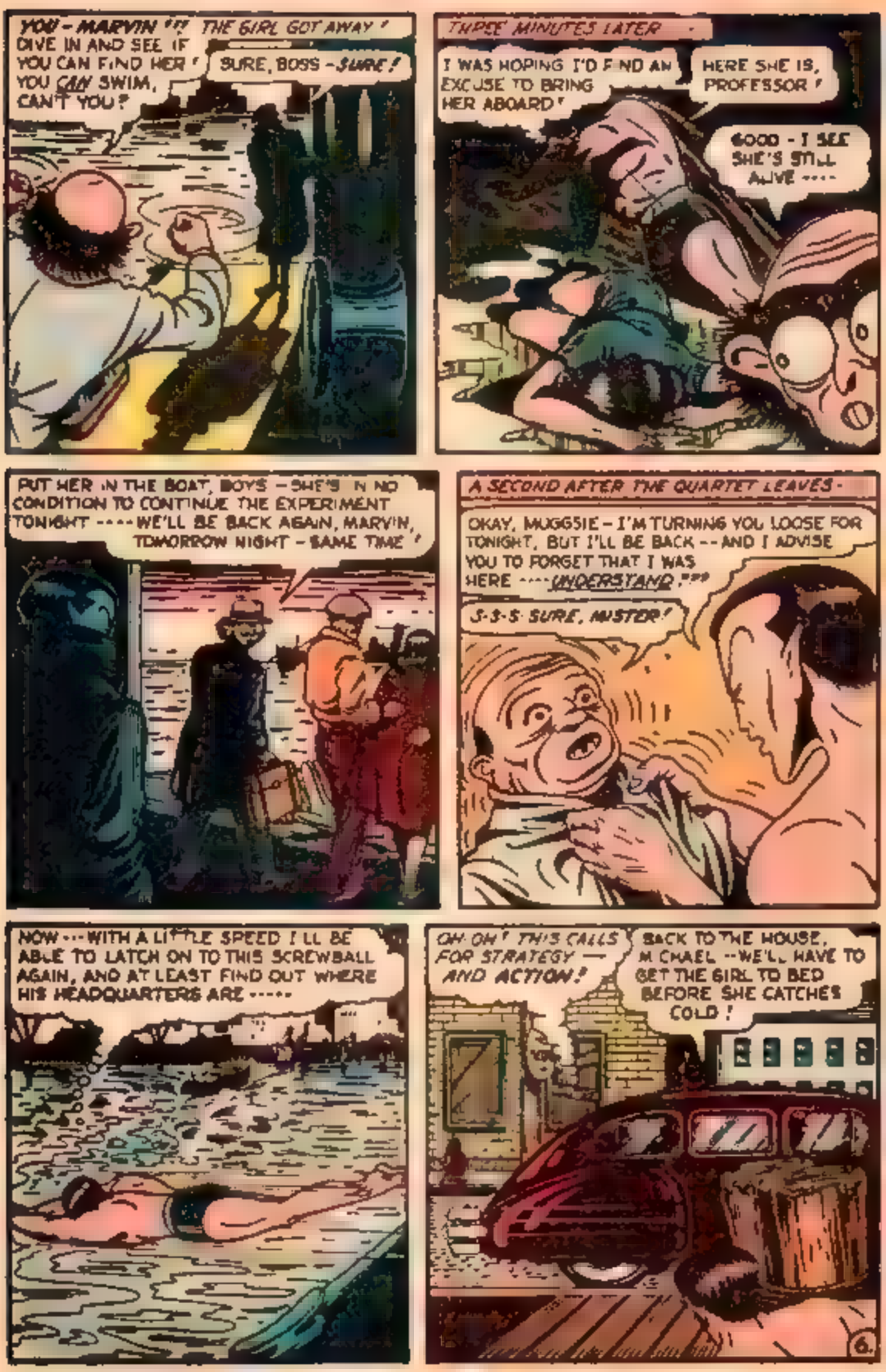

WHY IN THE WORLD WOULD ANYONE CUT A DIVING-WELL IN THE CENTER OF A DREDGE-- UNLESS THEY D ON'T WANT PEOPLE TO SEE THE PLATFORM LOWERED OVER THE SIDE? ---BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE! —OR DOES IT???

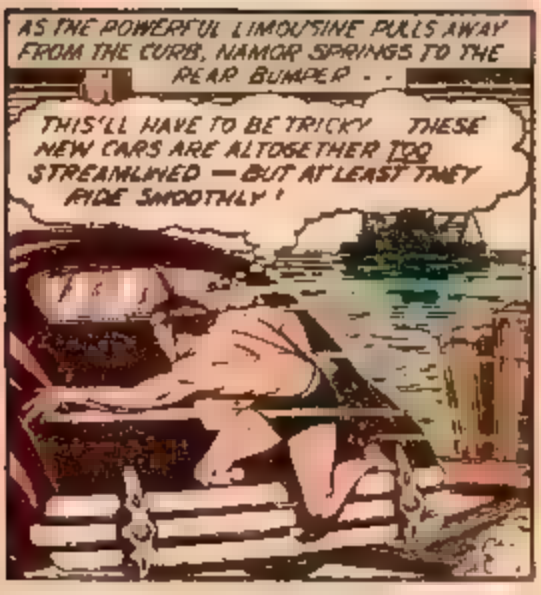

LET'S SEE WHAT ELSE WE CAN FIND ---- IF MUGGS E'S MIXED UP WITH THIS DEAL IT CAN'T BE LEGITIMATE --- WAIT A MINUTE! MAYBE THERE'S A CLUE IN THIS BUNCH OF PAPERS -----

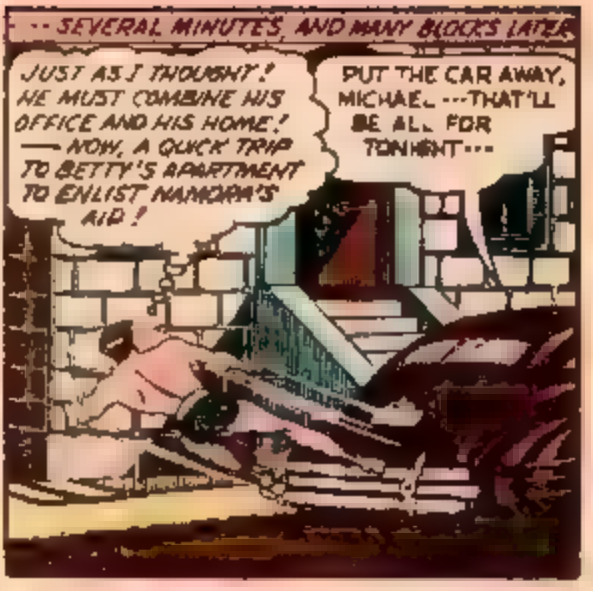

WHAT A BREAK! THAT'S TONIGHT ----- IN LESS THAN FIFTEEN MINUTES !!!
DR D. WENCHA
Martha ~
Next Experiment Monday
the 10th at midnight ~
Have everything ready.
Prof Wencha
3.

MAYBE IF I WEAR MUGGSIE'S COAT, AND STUFF HIM IN THE ROPE-LOCKER ---- IF I STAY IN THE SHADOWS, THEY WON'T RECOGNIZE ME ---- OH-OH! SOUNDS LIKE A SPEEDBOAT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DREDGE!
AHOY, MARVIN, YA LOAFER! MAKE THIS LINE FAST - AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT!!!
HOLD YOUR @%#& HORSES! I'M COMING!
HMM M! THIS MUST BE THE MYSTERIOUS DOCTOR MENCHA - - NEVER SAW HIM BEFORE!
CAREFUL, BOYS - - I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO UPSET HER BEFORE THE EXPERIMENT!
NOW WHAT IN NEPTUNE'S NAME ARE THEY GOING TO DO WITH THE GIRL???
DON'T BIND HER TOO TIGHTLY, BOYS I DON'T WANT HER BLOOD CIRCULATION STOPPED----
SHE'S READY PROFESSOR! BUT SHE'S STILL IN A DAZE ----
WHAT---AM I---?
JUST A MINUTE, NOW -----
OKAY - LOWER AWAY!!! NOW, JUST DON'T TRY TO FIGHT THIS, MY DEAR --- BE CALM, AND DO AS I SAY!
B-B-BUT WHY AM I TIED? WHAT ARE YOU G-GOING TO D-D-DO???
4


---FROM THE DECK, OUTSIDE ---
YIPE! I'M BEGINNING TO GET THE DRIFT OF THIS THING NOW - AND IF I'M RIGHT THAT GIRL MAY BE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE!!!
EIGHT FATHOMS BELOW! NO WONDER THE POOR KID'S KICKIN' UP A STORM! STILL--HE HAS TO LOWER HER FAST SO HER BODY WON'T BECOME TOO SATURATED WITH THE AIR SHE'S BREATHING FROM THAT TANK ON HER BACK---- JUST A SECOND, HONEY--I'M COMING!!!
NOW--GIT ALONG UP THERE GIRL! YOUR BLOOD, AT THIS DEPTH HAS ONLY ABOUT TWICE AS MUCH NITROGEN AS IT SHOULD, SO BUBBLES WON'T FORM, AND YOU'LL BE OKAY!
A MOMENT LATER----
SHE'LL BE DIZZY, BUT SHE'LL FLOAT--IF SHE'S GOT SENSE ENOUGH TO KEEP HER HEAD ABOVE WATER! I'LL BET THE OLD BOY'S BLOWING HIS TOP!!!
@&!*$?!!! WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO MY INSTRUMENTS!?? ALL THE INDICATORS ARE SPINNING LIKE CRAZY! RAISE THE PLATFORM!!!
EMPTY!
BUT WHERE--??? HOW COULD SHE HAVE GOT AWAY???
5

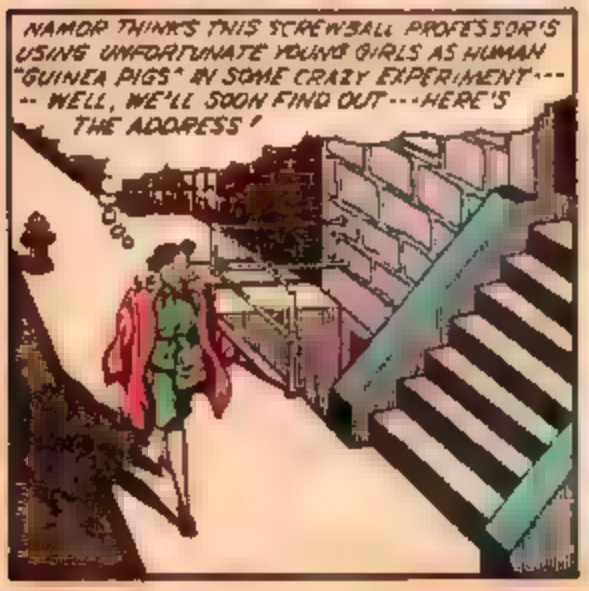

YOU - MARVIN !! THE GIRL GOT AWAY ! DIVE IN AND SEE IF YOU CAN FIND HER ! YOU CAN SWIM, CAN'T YOU?
SURE, BOSS - SURE!
THREE MINUTES LATER -
I WAS HOPING I'D FIND AN EXCUSE TO BRING HER ABOARD !
HERE SHE IS, PROFESSOR !
GOOD - I SEE SHE'S STILL ALIVE ----
PUT HER IN THE BOAT, BOYS - SHE'S IN NO CONDITION TO CONTINUE THE EXPERIMENT TONIGHT ---- WE'LL BE BACK AGAIN, MARVIN, TOMORROW NIGHT - SAME TIME !
A SECOND AFTER THE QUARTET LEAVES -
OKAY, MUGGSIE - I'M TURNING YOU LOOSE FOR TONIGHT, BUT I'LL BE BACK -- AND I ADVISE YOU TO FORGET THAT I WAS HERE ---- UNDERSTAND ???
S-S-S-SURE, MISTER !
NOW --- WITH A LITTLE SPEED I'LL BE ABLE TO LATCH ON TO THIS SCREWBALL AGAIN, AND AT LEAST FIND OUT WHERE HIS HEADQUARTERS ARE -----
OH-OH ! THIS CALLS FOR STRATEGY — AND ACTION !
BACK TO THE HOUSE, MICHAEL -- WE'LL HAVE TO GET THE GIRL TO BED BEFORE SHE CATCHES COLD !
6.


AS THE POWERFUL LIMOUSINE PULLS AWAY FROM THE CURB, NAMOR SPRINGS TO THE REAR BUMPER - -
THIS'LL HAVE TO BE TRICKY THESE NEW CARS ARE ALTOGETHER TOO STREAMLINED — BUT AT LEAST THEY RIDE SMOOTHLY !

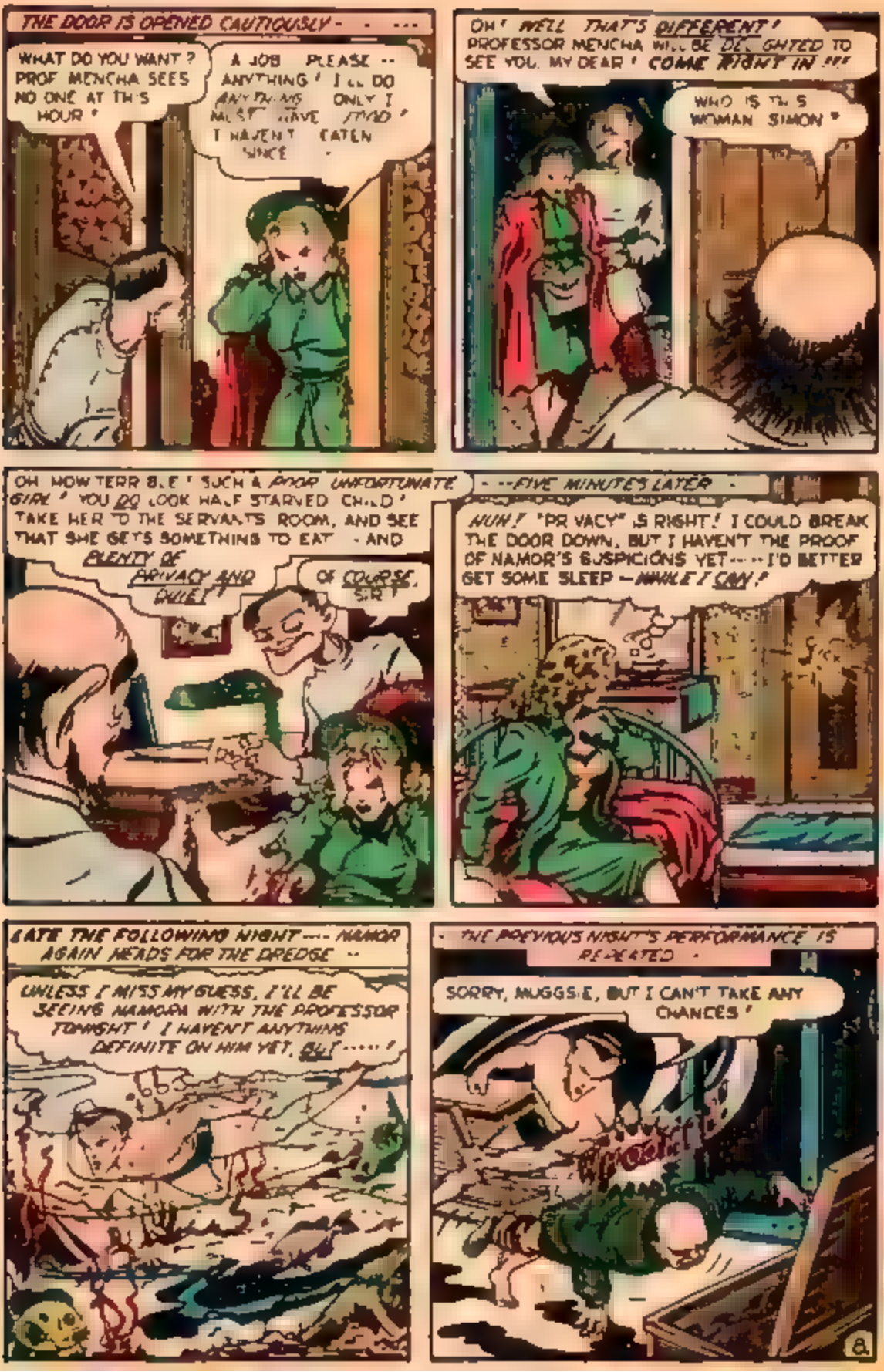

- - SEVERAL MINUTES, AND MANY BLOCKS LATER
JUST AS I THOUGHT ! HE MUST COMBINE HIS OFFICE AND HIS HOME ! — NOW, A QUICK TRIP TO BETTY'S APARTMENT TO ENLIST NAMORA'S AID !
PUT THE CAR AWAY, MICHAEL - - - THAT'LL BE ALL FOR TONIGHT - - -

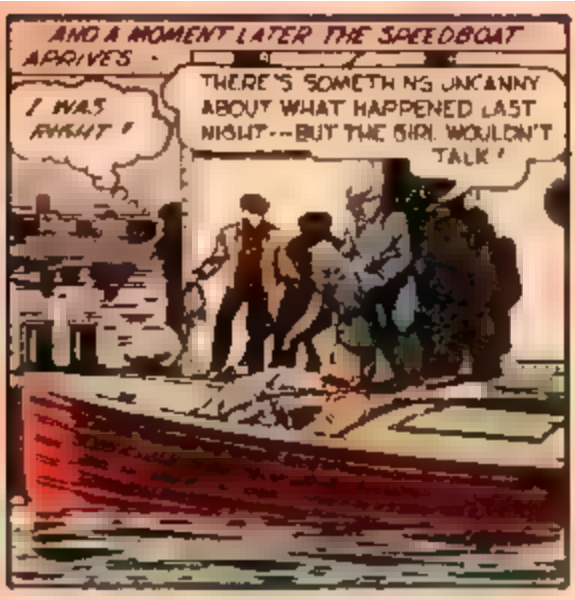
AT BETTY'S APARTMENT - - - -
NAMOR ! WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE AT THIS HOUR OF NIGHT - - OR RATHER, MORNING ???
I'VE A JOB FOR YOU, NAMORA — RIGHT AWAY !

- - - NAMOR EXPLAINS - - -
I WANT YOU TO DRESS IN BETTY'S OLDEST STREET CLOTHES - - - GO TO 1225 E 80TH ST, AND PRETEND YOU'RE BROKE AND ON THE VERGE OF STARVATION - - - THEN DO WHATEVER THEY TELL YOU TO - - - GOT IT ?
SURE !

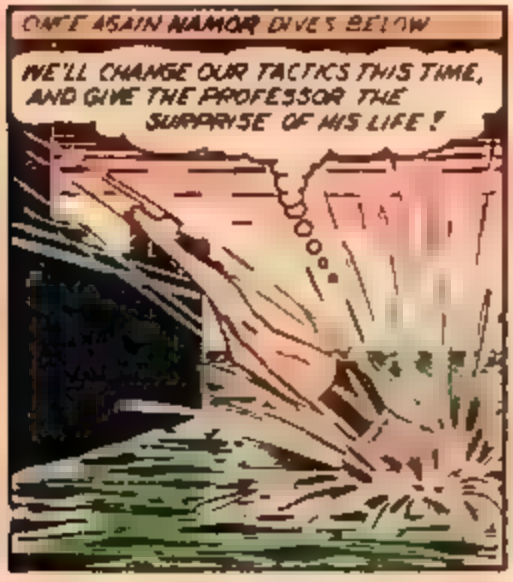

NAMOR THINKS THIS SCREWBALL PROFESSOR'S USING UNFORTUNATE YOUNG GIRLS AS HUMAN "GUINEA PIGS" IN SOME CRAZY EXPERIMENT - - - - WELL, WE'LL SOON FIND OUT - - - HERE'S THE ADDRESS !

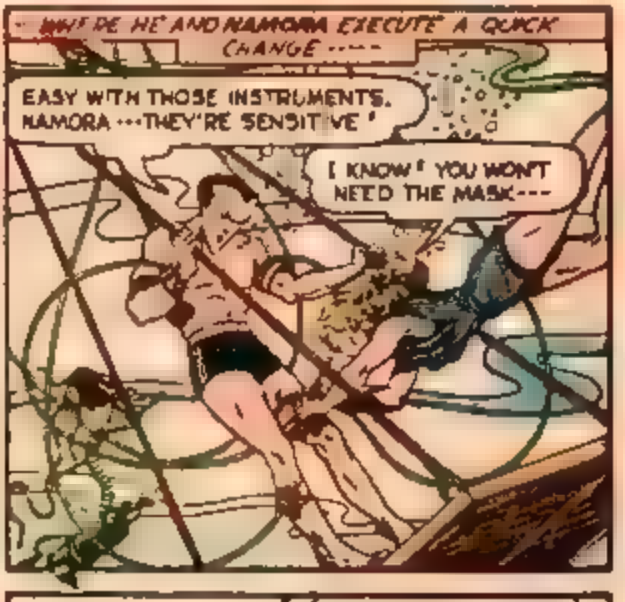
NOW - IF I CAN JUST DO A CONVINCING BIT OF ACTING - - - - THE HEAVY FACE MAKE UP WILL HELP - - - I HOPE ! HERE GOES !!!


THE DOOR IS OPENED CAUTIOUSLY - - ...
WHAT DO YOU WANT ? PROF MENCHA SEES NO ONE AT THIS HOUR !
A JOB PLEASE -- ANYTHING ! I'LL DO ANYTHING ONLY I MUST HAVE FOOD ! I HAVEN'T EATEN SINCE -
OH ! WELL THAT'S DIFFERENT ! PROFESSOR MENCHA WILL BE DELIGHTED TO SEE YOU, MY DEAR ! COME RIGHT IN !!!
WHO IS THIS WOMAN SIMON ?
OH HOW TERRIBLE ! SUCH A POOR UNFORTUNATE GIRL ! YOU DO LOOK HALF STARVED CHILD ! TAKE HER TO THE SERVANTS ROOM, AND SEE THAT SHE GETS SOMETHING TO EAT - AND PLENTY OF PRIVACY AND QUIET
OF COURSE, SIR !
- --FIVE MINUTES LATER -
HUH ! "PRIVACY" IS RIGHT ! I COULD BREAK THE DOOR DOWN, BUT I HAVEN'T THE PROOF OF NAMOR'S SUSPICIONS YET --- I'D BETTER GET SOME SLEEP — WHILE I CAN !
LATE THE FOLLOWING NIGHT --- NAMOR AGAIN HEADS FOR THE DREDGE --
UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, I'LL BE SEEING NAMORA WITH THE PROFESSOR TONIGHT ! I HAVEN'T ANYTHING DEFINITE ON HIM YET, BUT ..... !
- THE PREVIOUS NIGHT'S PERFORMANCE IS RE-PEATED -
SORRY, MUGGSIE, BUT I CAN'T TAKE ANY CHANCES !
Crash !!
8


AND A MOMENT LATER THE SPEEDBOAT ARRIVES
I WAS RIGHT!
THERE'S SOMETHING UNCANNY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT---BUT THE GIRL WOULDN'T TALK!

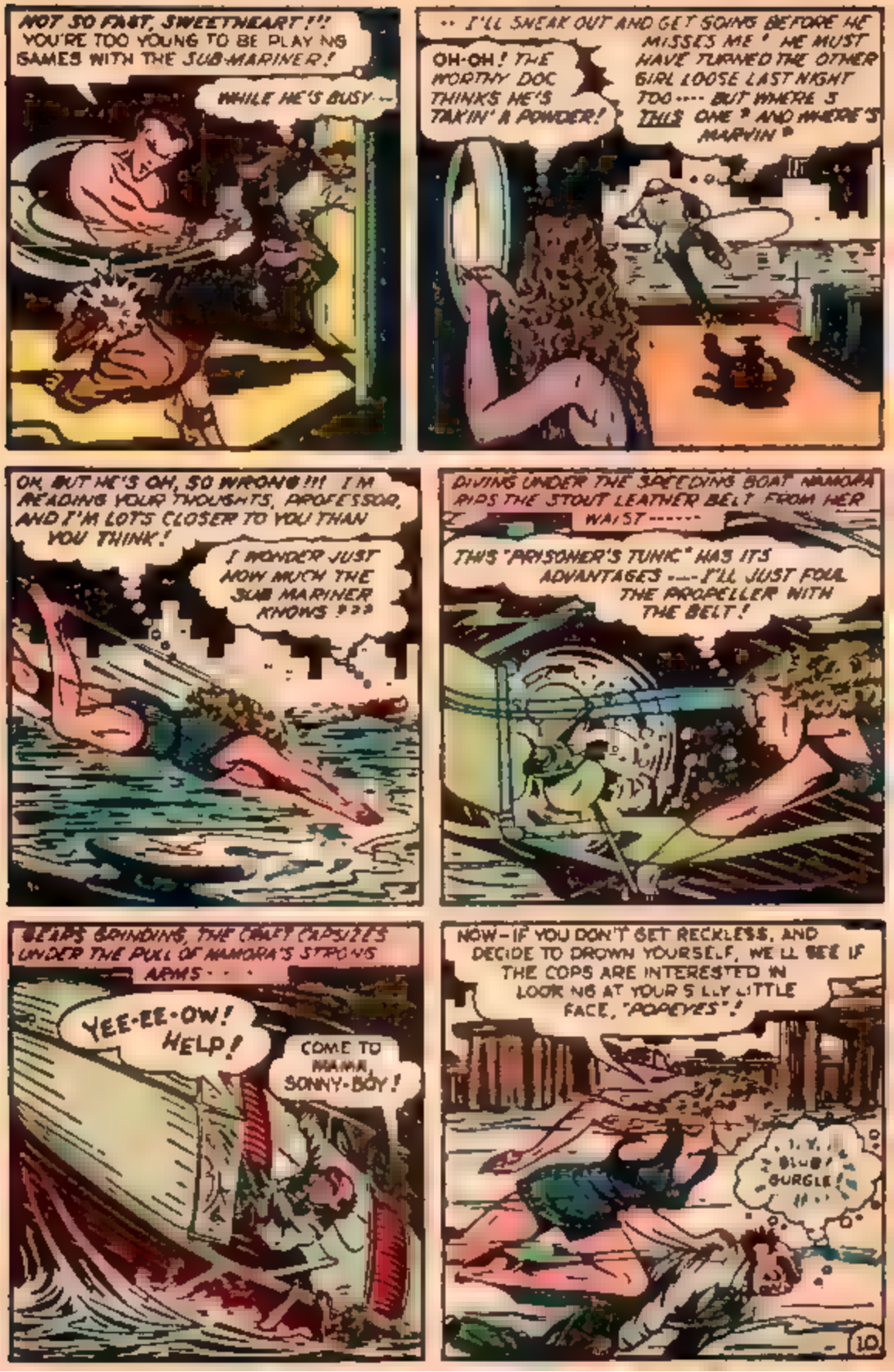
THIS ONE IS AN EXCEPTIONAL SPECIMEN.... SHE DOESN'T EVEN APPEAR NERVOUS! GOOD PHYSIQUE OUGHT TO STAND TWENTY-FIVE FATHOMS WITHOUT TOO MUCH TROUBLE!
LOWER AWAY!


ONCE AGAIN NAMOR DIVES BELOW
WE'LL CHANGE OUR TACTICS THIS TIME, AND GIVE THE PROFESSOR THE SURPRISE OF HIS LIFE!


WHILE HE AND NAMORA EXECUTE A QUICK CHANGE.....
EASY WITH THOSE INSTRUMENTS, NAMORA---THEY'RE SENSITIVE!
I KNOW! YOU WON'T NEED THE MASK---

THEN NAMORA ASCENDS TO THE DECK
HEAR! HEAR! THE MASTERMIND'S HAVING A TANTRUM! HO! HO!
@&!*%!!!
---RAISE THE PLATFORM!!!

SUBMARINER!
I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED!
SURPRISED TO SEE ME PROFESSOR? SORRY TO BUST UP YOUR LITTLE PARTY BUT----
I'LL GET 'IM, DOC!!!
9


NOT SO FAST, SWEETHEART!!! YOU'RE TOO YOUNG TO BE PLAYING GAMES WITH THE SUB-MARINER!
WHILE HE'S BUSY --
.. I'LL SNEAK OUT AND GET SONNY BEFORE HE MISSES ME! HE MUST HAVE TURNED THE OTHER GIRL LOOSE LAST NIGHT TOO.... BUT WHERE'S THIS ONE? AND WHERE'S MARVIN?
OH-OH! THE WORTHY DOC THINKS HE'S TAKIN' A POWDER!
OH, BUT HE'S OH, SO WRONG!!! I'M READING YOUR THOUGHTS, PROFESSOR, AND I'M LOTS CLOSER TO YOU THAN YOU THINK!
I WONDER JUST HOW MUCH THE SUB MARINER KNOWS???
DIVING UNDER THE SPEEDING BOAT NAMORA RIPS THE STOUT LEATHER BELT FROM HER WAIST------
THIS "PRISONER'S TUNIC" HAS ITS ADVANTAGES ---I'LL JUST FOUL THE PROPELLER WITH THE BELT!
GEARS GRINDING, THE CRAFT CAPSIZES UNDER THE PULL OF NAMORA'S STRONG ARMS...
YEE-EE-OW! HELP!
COME TO MAMA, SONNY-BOY!
NOW-IF YOU DON'T GET RECKLESS, AND DECIDE TO DROWN YOURSELF, WE'LL SEE IF THE COPS ARE INTERESTED IN LOOKING AT YOUR SILLY LITTLE FACE, "POPEYES"!
BLUB! GURGLE!
10

A MOMENT LATER, ON THE DOCK
SERGEANT, SEND A COUPLE OF BOYS TO PIER "B" --- I'VE GOT A SUSPECT FOR THE CASE OF THE GIRL THAT DIED OF THE "BENDS"!

PROFESSOR D. MENCHA? HOW DID YOU CATCH HIM, AND WHY SHOULD HE BE A SUSPECT, NAMORA?
IT'S A LONG STORY --- I'LL TELL YOU ON THE WAY TO THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE -- THERE'S ANOTHER POSSIBLE VICTIM THERE!

SO YOU SEE, IT LOOKS LIKE NAMOR'S ON THE RIGHT TRACK --- THE PROFESSOR SEEMS TO BE WORKING ON SOME NEW THEORY CONCERNING THE "BENDS", AND SOMETHING WENT WRONG WHEN HE EXPERIMENTED ON THE GIRL THAT DIED LAST NIGHT ----- OKAY, HERE WE ARE --ON THE RIGHT---
POLICE

WELL, WELL, WELL! OUR SIMPERING SIMON'S STILL UP! SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, OLD BOY, BUT WE WANT A WORD OR TWO WITH YOU!
WHERE'S THE PRO---? COPS!!! G-GET OUT OF HERE!

NOW, THAT'S A FINE WAY TO WELCOME A POOR STARVIN' LI'L GAL --BUT IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT, HERE'S MY HAND!!! PICK YOUR SKINNY FRAME UP OFF THE FLOOR, AND SHOW US WHERE YOU'RE KEEPING THE OTHER GIRL!

THIS THE ONE? SHE'S BREATHING OKAY----
PROBABLY COLLAPSED FROM EXHAUSTION AND NERVE-STRAIN ---- BETTER GET HER TO A HOSPITAL!

WITH THE PROFESSOR'S AIDE IN CUSTODY, NAMORA AND THE POLICE HEAD FOR THE PRECINCT STATION---
THE DESK SERGEANT SENT A HARBOR BOAT TO PICK UP THE SUB-MARINER, NAMORA ----- HE SHOULD BE WAITING FOR US AT HEADQUARTERS -----
GOOD!
----THREE MINUTES LATER -----
WELL, I SEE YOU BROUGHT YOUR TWO LITTLE PLAYMATES HOME WITH YOU! BUT WHAT'S THE IDEA OF LEAVING THE TOUGH ASSIGNMENTS TO ME ???
TAKE IT EASY, NAMORA --- YOU KNOW YOU GOT A BANG OUT OF IT! ALL I PICKED UP WAS THE "SMALL-FRY" — AND THE "LAB" EQUIPMENT FOR ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE! YOU AND THE OTHER GIRL AND I CAN TESTIFY FOR THE PROSECUTION --- BUT I THINK IT'S REALLY A CASE FOR A BOARD OF ALIENISTS!
-----DAYS LATER, AT THE TRIAL -----
YOUR HONOR, THE EVIDENCE GIVEN BY SUCH A PERSON OF DISTINCTION AS THE SUB-MARINER MUST BE INFALLIBLE! I BEG THAT THE COURT DIRECT THE JURY TO RETURN A VERDICT OF GUILTY OF INVOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER!!!
---THE PROSECUTION WINS!!!
NO! NO-NO-NO!!! I'LL APPEAL! I'M INNOCENT! LET-ME-GO!!!
---AND NAMOR AND NAMORA LEAVE THE COURTROOM TO FIND BETTY DEAN ----
DO YOU THINK HE'S REALLY CRAZY, NAMOR?
OF COURSE! BUT HIS ASSISTANTS DESERVE THE FIVE YEARS EACH THE JUDGE GAVE 'EM! OH WELL, MAYBE THEY DIDN'T KNOW THE "BENDS" ARE EASY TO PREVENT!
12.
-THE END-

HEY, GANG! See the Official U.S. ARMY OFFICER'S COMPASS I got on this WAR SURPLUS CLOSE-OUT!

...AND NOW YOU CAN GET YOURS

a $4.75 Value for only $1.49

WHILE THEY LAST...!

- Break-proof crystal
- Luminous Easy-to-read dial
- Accurate Jewelled needle always points North
- Precision-built by Waltham Watch Company

only $1.49 FOR THIS $4.75 VALUE

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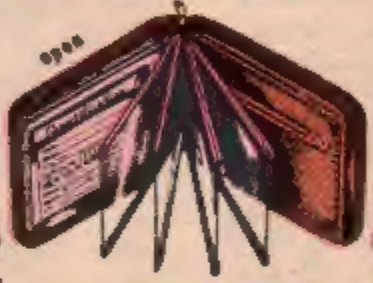

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